

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A hall-effect plasma thruster having a longitudinal axis substantially parallel to a thrust direction defining an upstream portion and a downstream portion, and comprising:

a primary ionization and acceleration channel made of a refractory material surrounded by two circular cylindrical poles, the acceleration channel being open at its upstream end;

an annular gas-dispensing anode receiving gas from gas-distribution lines and equipped with passages for admitting the gas into the acceleration channel, the annular anode being placed inside of the acceleration channel in a downstream portion of the acceleration channel;

at least one hollow cathode arranged outside the acceleration channel, and adjacent thereto;

a magnetic circuit comprising upstream polar ends for creating a radial magnetic field in an upstream portion of the channel between the polar ~~parts~~ ends, the magnetic circuit including a downstream plate, from which protrude, upstream and parallel to the longitudinal axis, a central arm situated at a center of the acceleration channel, two circular cylindrical poles on both sides of the acceleration channel, and peripheral arms situated on an exterior of the acceleration channel and adjacent thereto,

wherein at least one of the peripheral arms of the magnetic circuit comprises a downstream portion made of a soft magnetic material, an upstream portion made of a soft

magnetic material, and a permanent magnet centrally disposed between the downstream portion and the upstream portion.

Claims 12-17 (Canceled).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein no field coil is engaged around the peripheral arms of the magnetic circuit comprising [[a]] the permanent magnet.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the peripheral arms are arranged in rotational symmetry around the longitudinal axis.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the peripheral arms each comprise a permanent magnet, wherein the central arm is made of a magnetic material only, and wherein a field coil is engaged around the central arm.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn and Currently Amended): [[A]] The plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the central arm comprises a permanent magnet, ~~wherein the peripheral arms are made of a magnetic material only, and wherein a field coil is engaged around the~~ central arm.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn and Currently Amended): [[A]] The plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the central arm comprises a permanent magnet, and wherein all of the peripheral arms comprise a permanent magnet.